

DIVISION OF FEES.

A retired physician, who is now actively engaged as a banker, in relating to the writer of these paragraphs that the people of his town had so much confidence in him that "nothing big could come off" (note the language of the counting house) in a medical way unless he were consulted, went on to say that he rarely charged for this consultatory service because most of the townsmen were old friends of his. And then he went on again, in the most casual manner, and made the astounding statement that there were no capable surgeons in his town, and that he sent all the surgical cases he could to "the city," and that the city surgeon sent him half the fee, and that he was thus able to "*pick up a couple of thousand a year.*"

When taken to task, he offered the argument that he had nothing whatever to do with the transaction. The surgeon makes his own price for the services, collects the money and, with no solicitation on the part of the "banker-doctor," sends him half. The "banker-doctor" says that it is none of his business if the surgeon is willing to present him with half his earnings.

He was not alone unwilling, but definitely objected to have the transaction characterized in the plain Anglo-Saxon terms, dirty and crooked. He vigorously maintained that his skirts were clean, and that his patients were not in any sense mulcted. *But he refused to reveal the name of the surgeon!*

Do you see the point? Is it necessary to lead you to the moral? Isn't it as plain as the nose on your face? Is it right?

THE THOUGHTLESS DOCTOR.

It seems to make no difference how often commonplace advice is repeated; every so often it requires re-statement. The Journal has called attention again and again to the number of malpractice suits arising from a thoughtless statement of a physician. Given such a statement, an ignorant or malicious patient, and a shyster lawyer, a malpractice suit follows as a matter of course. Most of the trouble arises from patients who migrate from doctor to doctor, picking up fragments of statements as they migrate. Of course, most of these suits are groundless and are dropped, but they are nevertheless a burden upon the budget. Many of our recent suits have arisen in just this way. This matter is a straight dollars and cents proposition. Every one of these suits, unfounded as they are, costs so much money for legal services. In the aggregate they are sufficient to increase or decrease the amount of your premium.

It is not alone a duty, but a pleasure, for the Society to defend members in malpractice suits, but it does hurt to see its funds depleted and diverted because one of its members has said something that he really did not mean.

THE LEGISLATURE AND MEDICINE.

At the time of writing the State legislature is still in session and will be for about two weeks. As usual it has had various medical problems to consider and it can be said that up to the present time it has, on the whole, done well. It must be remembered that the average senator and assembly man has no desire to see vicious or undesirable legislation passed. He wants to be advised, but unfortunately the great bulk of the medical profession is apathetic and does nothing, and the most pressing and compelling advice comes from those interested in vicious medical legislation. Naturally when a legislator receives numerous urgent requests for certain action in matters pending and there is little or no objection to the same he is very much inclined to consider the former as "a request from the people," and act accordingly. Bear this in mind please, those of you who do nothing until the fight is all over and then attempt to criticize. The California State Medical Society ought to develop and exert its political strength more forcibly. With almost 5000 regular practitioners in California and only about 1000 osteopaths and about 130 drugless healers, it will be seen that the representatives of different freak cults have political influence all out of proportion to their numbers. It is humiliating to realize that this is the case. It need not be any longer if we will only exert ourselves. Now is the time to get ready for the next legislative session two years hence. Interview your present senators and assemblymen and later on their successors and have them promise to consult you in regard to medical legislation.

RADIUM.

Local physicians have purchased during recent months quantities of radium element aggregating 250 milligrams for use in their respective practices. This radium is mounted in various types of applicators designed for Dermatological, Gynecological and Surgical uses.

The United States Bureau of Standards at Washington provides for the measurement of radium expressed in terms of actual radium element contained, and issues certificates based on the International Radium Standard.

The present market price of radium is \$100.00 per milligram. There is a strong probability, however, that the great advance in the costs of production, chemicals and laboratory equipment, will sharply affect radium production, and an early advance is inevitable.

Radium is extracted from uranium ores, large deposits of which are found in Colorado. It is from this source that the main supply is obtained